

A WEEKLY INFORMATION DIGEST

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17 ROUTE DE MALAGNOU, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

AND QUERIES THROUGH

BETTY THOMPSON - N.Y.C. OFFICE

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

156 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 10, NEW YORK

WATKINS 4-8553

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION \$5.00

No. 7

Twenty-fourth Year



February 22, 1957

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Bishop Barbieri on the Situation in Colombia

(Geneva) - The reports about the oppression of Protestants in Colombia are, in most cases, absolutely true, Bishop Sante Uberto Barbieri of the Argentine said this month in a recent interview in Geneva. Bishop Barbieri, one of the presidents of the World Council of Churches, was attending a meeting of the Executive Committee of the World Council.

In Colombia, Bishop Barbieri said, Protestant schools, mission stations and churches have been closed by the authorities, services interrupted, Protestants arrested. At times, church buildings have been destroyed and outrages committed against Protestants and missionaries.

Bishop Barbieri said that the Roman Catholic hierarchy is using the political situation to wage a campaign against Protestants and has paid no attention to the papal encyclicals, urging moderation. The Roman Catholics have said that the purity of the Christian faith in Colombia must be protected against Protestant sects, mostly of North American origin. However, Bishop Barbieri pointed out, in Colombia the Protestant church work was not carried out by the so-called "sects", but by churches of long standing. The Reformed Church of Colombia has a century of tradition behind it. Bishop Barbieri said that there is also disunity among the Roman Catholics. The Colombian clergy are opposed not only to the Protestant missionaries from North America but also to missionaries sent by Roman Catholic mission groups in North America.

In answer to Protestant charges, Roman Catholics have said that hundreds of their own number have been killed in Colombia. But, Bishop Barbieri says, Roman Catholics only have to endure political persecution, while Protestants are persecuted both for their political views and for their religion.

Protestant churches in most other South American countries are more or less free - at any rate there is no open persecution, Bishop Barbieri said. In Mexico, Peru and Venezuela there are certain restrictions on Protestant work. In some places Protestants have no access to radio stations or have not received permits or have not received permits to set up their own transmitting stations.

E.P.S., Geneva

Fifth Graduate School Ends February 14 at Bossey

The fifth semester of the Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies ended on February 14 when the students received certificates in ceremonies at the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches at Bossey, Switzerland.

At the closing session, the largest number of students in the school's history were told by Institute Director H. H. Wolf that "The battle begins now with you. The problems are not solved, the unity of the church is not established at Bossey."

"But," he said, "I hope no one will ever forget that the main purpose of the institute was to win you for the high purposes of the ecumenical movement. Do not imprison all the things you have learned here in your heart, but share them with your people. We count definitely on your cooperation."

Professor F. Leenhardt, dean of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Geneva, warned the students that "you will not find your country as you left it. But you will bring the people this ecumenical ferment. I hope you will be faithful and good workers for the ecumenical movement and for Christ, who is the only head of the Church." The Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies is conducted in association with the University of Geneva. Professor Jaques Courvoisier, the vice-rector of the University and chairman of the Graduate School board, also spoke briefly to the group.

Teaching at the Graduate School were the Rev. P. S. Watson of Cambridge, England; Professor L. B. Pinomaa, Theological Faculty of Helsinki University in Finland; Professor E. Dinkler, University of Bonn, Germany; Brother Max Thurian, of the Taizé Community in France; Professor K. A. Busia of the Gold Coast; Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, general secretary of the WCC; Dr. Charles A. West, assistant director of the Institute; Dr. Robert S. Paul, associate director; and Dr. Wolf.

Twelve of the students came from the United States, six from Germany, both East and West, three from Great Britain and one each from Ceylon, Denmark, France, Poland, India, Madagascar, Malaya, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Switzerland. One of the students is a Russian exile now studying in France.

There were eight Methodists among the students this year, six Reformed and Presbyterians, four Disciples of Christ, four Lutherans, four United (Evangelical Church in Germany, Church of South India), two Anglicans, two Baptists, one Congregationalist, one member of the Mar Thoma Church and one Orthodox. E.P.S., Geneva

CHINA

Australian Anglicans Report on Church in China

Eight Anglicans from Australia, back from a 15,000-mile tour of the Chinese mainland, have reported that they found the Anglican Church there free to preach Christianity and to publish books and other literature.

The group, invited by Bishop G. T. Chen, head of the Church in China, was led by the Most Rev. Howard W. K. Mowll, primate of the Church of England in Australia and a former bishop of the Chinese Church (see also EPS Nos. 32/33 and 47, 1956).

Archbishop Mowll reports that several of the Chinese bishops "emphasized to us that Christianity and Communism are fundamentally widely apart, one being a faith in redemption through Christ - the other a man-made ideology. Nevertheless, they felt that the achievements of the present regime were remarkable, and beneficial for the nation. We also gathered that many Christians have been elected to local, provincial and national committees by their fellow citizens, so that the Church in these days is conscious of being a part of the life of the nation in a more real sense than in former years. Freedom of religion is guaranteed in the constitution of the People's Republic of China."

Youth work, Archbishop Mowll reported, seems to be difficult because Christian schools, universities and hospitals have been taken over by the government. "However," he added, "many former Christian teachers and doctors are still employed and are even given important administrative posts. The government does not discriminate against Christians. One of the most encouraging features of our visit was the number of former students of our mission schools and universities who came to welcome us. These old friends of ours still remain steadfast in their Christian faith."

The archbishop was "much impressed by the able leadership given by so many of the bishops and members of the Church in China (Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui). Their time of opportunity", he added, "may be limited, they may have to face difficult days ahead, as they have faced them in the past." The time of drastic extermination seems to have passed, Archbishop Mowll said, and to have been forgotten, "although indoctrination continues - through radio propaganda, with slogans everywhere. Loudspeakers often prevent any quiet rest in the day or night, especially on railroad trains."

When he arrived back in Sydney, Archbishop Mowll started a nation-wide controversy when he said, "Religion is working openly and effectively in Communist China. Congregations are growing at a remarkable rate. The people seem happy and contented under the present regime."

Dr. Malcolm MacKay, minister of a leading Presbyterian Church in Sydney and a former secretary of the Australian Council for the World Council of Churches, contended that the Chinese had carefully rigged all the Australians saw and heard. "The churches in China are as free as a tiger in a cage," he said. -

The Sydney Telegraph and the Daily Herald both denounced the Archbishop's views.

Writing in Episcopal Churchnews, Francis James, a lay member of the delegation, reports Chinese Anglicans and other Christians can now receive books and letters from the West. "These, our brothers," he writes, "have been almost completely cut off from the thought of the Church in the West for many years. They are starved for news and views. The Church in China today is now sufficiently independent, national, self-supporting to be able to afford contacts with the West on a scale psychologically impossible during recent years when missionary work was equated in all Chinese minds with 'Imperialism'. They will welcome all you send." E.P.S., Geneva

HUNGARY

Bishop Turoczy Installed in Budapest

The Rt. Rev. Zoltan Turoczy from Győr was installed on February 6 in Budapest as bishop of the Northern Diocese of the Hungarian Lutheran Church. At the same time, Dr. Zoltan Mady was installed as lay inspector of the diocese.

Bishop Turoczy, who said he did not want to make a critique of the past, said "my words are meant only to be watchwords for the future." He added that the church does not live to rule, "but to be ruled by the Word."

A former bishop of one of the four dioceses of the Hungarian Lutheran Church, Bishop Turoczy was forced to resign his bishopric in 1952. He lived in retirement until November 1956, when he was called by his congregation. Later he was asked to serve as temporary bishop. He was elected on January 19. Inspector Mady also served as inspector until 1952, when he was forced to resign. E.P.S., Geneva

UNITED STATES

Martin Luther - Television and Cinema

Several television stations throughout the U.S. have expressed an interest in showing the film "Martin Luther", cancelled in December by Station WGN-TV in Chicago (see EPS No.3). Robert E. A. Lee, executive secretary of Lutheran Church Productions, producers of the film, said the offers are under "serious consideration" but added that "we are still urging WGN-TV to reverse its negative decision and present the film because it has a moral responsibility to do so."

Protestant leaders in Chicago alleged that the film was withdrawn because of "pressures which have been mobilized by the Roman Catholic Church." A formal protest has been lodged with the Federal Communications Commission against WGN-TV for banning the film on the grounds that the station's public interest responsibility was violated by its act of permitting de facto censorship.

"Martin Luther", with Portuguese subtitles, has had a highly successful premiere in Sao Paulo, Brazil, where it played to capacity crowds in six cinemas simultaneously. Earlier censorship by Brazil was lifted a year ago. Meanwhile, government censorship bans have been continued in Canada's Province of Quebec, the Philippines, Peru and Egypt, and efforts are still being made to get permission to show the film in Spain, Italy, Greece, Israel and various Latin American countries. The film has been subtitled in Spanish, Portuguese, French, Chinese, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Finnish and Dutch, and dubbed versions have been issued in Spanish and German. E.P.S., Geneva

GERMANY

Roman Catholic Institute for Study of Christian Confessions Opened

(Paderborn) - The Johann Adam Möhler Institute for the comparative study of various Christian confessions and Catholic minority areas was opened by Roman Catholics in Paderborn at the beginning of the annual Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity this year. All the Catholic theological faculties in Germany and many leading European theologians were present at the opening ceremony. The main purpose of the institute is to promote understanding between the Christian confessions on a scientific level by study of their theological bases. The director is Professor Eduard Stakemeier. Its organ is the theological paper Catholica, edited by Professor Grosche, dean of Cologne Cathedral, which has been in existence for twenty-five years.

...Three New Catholic Academies

Three new Catholic academies have been opened in Germany: the Rhabanus Maurus Academy in Wiesbaden, the Academy of the Archdiocese in Freiburg, and the Catholic Academy for Bavaria in Munich. At the opening of the Wiesbaden Academy the Roman Catholic Bishop of Mainz "warmly advocated a friendly dialogue" between the Evangelical Academy at Arnoldshain and the new Catholic academy.

Cardinal Joseph Wendel said in his opening address that the academy in Munich wishes to foster "good, neighborly relations with the Evangelical Academy" at Tutzing in the Starnberger See. He described this as the logical outcome of one of the main tasks of the Catholic academy - to find freedom between Christian tolerance and the inevitable intolerance involved in the search for truth. E.P.S., Geneva

LWF Plans Expanded Aid in Hungary

The Hungarian government has agreed to allow church sponsored relief goods to be received by and distributed through church headquarters in Budapest, the Rev. Mogens Zeuthen has reported after a ten-day visit to Hungary. Pastor Zeuthen is Lutheran World Federation secretary for Minority Lutheran Churches.

The LWF, in cooperation with other Protestant agencies, is planning an expanded program of aid for Hungarian Protestant churches. Pastor Zeuthen brought back a list of goods which the government will allow customs-free into the country. Most needed, he said, are baby clothes (especially diapers), baby food, new underclothing for men, women and children, bed linen, soap and disinfectants, vitamins, canned goods, coffee, tea, cocoa and sugar.

Pastor Zeuthen was told that the Hungarian Lutheran Church needs theological literature, including books, magazines, newspapers and pamphlets, and paper and financial help to publish new Hungarian Bibles and theological books.

Dr. Carl E. Lund-Quist, executive secretary of the LWF, and Pastor Zeuthen left for Hungary on January 31. Dr. Lund-Quist returned to Geneva on February 4 (see EPS No. 5). E.P.S., Geneva

UNITED KINGDOM

Anglican-Free Church Cooperation in Religious Education

A group of experts from both the Church of England and the Free Churches have just finished a study of the effect on children of the worship and religious instruction they receive in both county and voluntary schools and in Sunday schools. The report is published by the British Council of Churches. The project is the first where there has been this kind of Anglican-Free Church cooperation in the Sunday school field under the auspices of the British Council of Churches, according to the Rev. E.C.D. Stanford, secretary of the Education Department of the Council. Included in the report is a survey of religious education in day schools and in Sunday schools of both the Church of England and the Free Churches. E.P.S., Geneva

Lutherans, Anglicans, Appoint African Leaders

The recent election of the Rev. Ezra D. Keller as president of the 4,000-member Evangelical Lutheran Church in Liberia is the first appointment of an African to the highest office in any Lutheran church body in that continent.

The Rev. Kosiya Shalita, whose appointment as Assistant Anglican Bishop of Kigezi-Ankole in the diocese of Uganda is also announced, will be the third African of four Assistant Bishops in the diocese. E.P.S., Geneva

YMCA/YWCA Aid Refugees in Hungary, Middle East

The YMCA and YWCA report that 13 centers are now in full operation in Austria for Hungarian refugees. Four more are due to be finished in the next few months. Thirty small centers have been set up in camps where no community center is available. They are being used as reading and writing rooms, for language classes and as sewing centers. More than 3,000 refugees are enrolled in language classes.

The Egyptian YMCA and YWCA are doing special work among the refugees from Port Said

and Sinai. Recently a shipment of clothing gathered by Egyptian students in Geneva was shipped to Egypt by the World Alliance. The World Alliance Refugee Committee has made special appropriations to maintain the work in Gaza. E.P.S., Geneva

FRANCE

French Protestants and Events in Algeria

(Paris) - Representatives of the Protestant Churches of North Africa and those of France met in Paris from January 25-27 to consider the current events and problems in North Africa. It was their fifth meeting since 1953.

The churchmen called on the French people in France and North Africa to make heavy sacrifices, but at the same time pointed out that the work to be done cannot be accomplished by France, Algeria, Morocco and Tunis alone. "It requires the united efforts of the whole world and especially of the countries of Europe."

It is more important than ever for the North Africa churches to bear witness to Jesus Christ, the representatives said. We must respond by working closely with the missions and keeping our doors wide open to Christians of every denomination and nationality. At the same time, the Christians who remain in North Africa must cooperate in taking responsibility for the life and work of their churches.

The churches in Morocco and Tunis expect that religious freedom will continue, in accordance with the Universal Charter of Human Rights. With regard to Algeria, the representatives offered no solution, but hoped that whatever decision is made, it will be possible to work for reconstruction and establish a future with justice, dignity, freedom and peace.

Pastor Marc Boegner, president of the French Protestant Federation, was chairman of the meeting. E.P.S., Geneva

SWITZERLAND

Television Clause Supported by Church Television Commissions

The television commissions of the Protestant, Roman Catholic and Old Catholic Churches of Switzerland have given their unanimous approval to a draft provision that would, they say, "provide the best guarantee that the influence of television will be controlled in accordance with Swiss principles." On March 2 and 3 Swiss citizens will vote on adopting a new clause on radio and television to the Swiss constitution.

The commissions say that if the clause, which has been approved by the Swiss Federal Council and the Parliament, is defeated, "the door would be left open for commercial broadcasts which would be difficult to control, and which would include undesirable and destructive influence which would undermine the religious, moral and human bases of Swiss society."

Late in 1956 the three church TV commissions formed a joint committee to promote "active cooperation between television and the churches." E.P.S., Geneva

In Brief

Members of the Methodist Church in the United States were asked to give \$600,000 for the church's fourteen Negro institutions on Race Relations Sunday, February 10. The goal is about twice the amount given for the same cause a year ago.

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The Church of Scotland, which already has intercommunion with the Churches of Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark, has informed President Stempel of the Church of the Palatinate, Speyer, that it would also like to be in communion with the Protestant Church of the Palatinate, which since last year has approved intercommunion with the member churches of the International Congregational Council.

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Pastor Ahti Auranen of Helsinki, formerly general secretary of Lutheran World Service in Austria, has received the "Grand Silver Medal of Honour for Services to the Republic of Austria", bestowed by Chancellor Raab in recognition of Pastor Auranen's work for refugees and emigrants.

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